



HEALTH PROFILE: UKRAINE

HIV/AIDS

Estimated Number of Adults and Children Living with HIV/AIDS (end 2003)	360,000 (low-high estimates 180,000-590,000)
Total Population (2004)	48,151,000
Adult HIV Prevalence (end 2003)	1.4%
HIV-I Seroprevalence in Urban Areas	
Population most at risk (injecting drug users, sex workers and their clients, patients seeking treatment for sexually transmitted infections, or other persons with known risk factors)	1.8%
Population least at risk (pregnant women, blood donors, older populations, and other persons with no known risk factors)	0.2%

Sources: UNAIDS, U.S. Census Bureau

Ukraine has one of the fastest growing HIV/AIDS epidemics in the world. First identified in the country in 1987, HIV/AIDS appeared to be confined to a small population of foreign students until the mid-1990s, when a sudden and explosive epidemic emerged among injecting drug users in the southern and eastern regions of the country. UNAIDS estimates that the number of people infected with HIV/AIDS in 2003 was 360,000 (range 180,000 to 590,000), representing an adult prevalence of 1.4%. According to the Ministry of Health—which estimates that by 2002 there were more than 500,000 people infected, or nearly 2% of the adult population—the epidemic has now spread to every oblast in the country. Prevalence in the southern and eastern oblasts (Odessa, Mykolayiv, Dnipropetrovsk, and Donetsk) is about three times higher than rates in the rest of the country.

In the mid-1990s, transmission was primarily through injecting drug use. By 2001, however, the proportion of new cases of HIV/AIDS attributable to injecting drug use had declined to 57% from 84% in 1997. During that time, heterosexual transmission increased from 11% to 27%, and perinatal transmission increased from 2% to 13% as a proportion of total cases. Although HIV/AIDS has to date remained concentrated among marginalized and vulnerable populations, it may be spreading to the general population. The majority of those infected are under 30 years of age; a full 25% of those affected are still in their teens.

Among the issues driving the HIV/AIDS epidemic are high levels of migration and transactional sex; widespread stigma and discrimination (which prevent injecting drug users, sex workers, men who have sex with men, and other marginalized people from seeking and receiving prevention and treatment interventions); inadequate health and other social services; rising rates of tuberculosis, sexually transmitted infections, and substance abuse; and a general lack of information about the kinds of risky behaviors that contribute to HIV/AIDS. According to the Ministry of Health, Ukraine has already surpassed the “optimistic” projections of an HIV/AIDS rate of 2% in 2010.

NATIONAL RESPONSE

The policy and legal environment in Ukraine is generally favorable for combating the spread of HIV/AIDS, but there is a gap between national-level policies and laws and local-level practices. The National AIDS Committee

December 2004



The new USAID HIV/AIDS strategy, covering the period 2003–2008, is designed to foster a coordinated, strategic, public-private effort to create a critical mass of high-quality HIV/AIDS services in up to eight oblasts with the highest HIV prevalence.

funded by international organizations. Because HIV testing is limited to government facilities, those at greatest risk are not being reached, since marginalized populations are the least likely to use government facilities. Stigma by the medical profession against persons living with HIV/AIDS is a major barrier to accessing information and services.

USAID SUPPORT

Because of the escalating HIV/AIDS epidemic and its potential for significant economic, political, and social impact, USAID identified Ukraine as one of 23 priority HIV/AIDS countries in 2002. A USAID/Ukraine assessment of the HIV/AIDS situation in that year showed that, despite a decade of international effort, prevention efforts still reached only 10 to 15% of the high-risk populations. USAID adopted a focused strategy to help Ukraine reduce HIV/AIDS transmission and keep national seroprevalence under 5%. As part of its stepped-up effort, USAID provided \$4 million in bilateral HIV/AIDS assistance in FY 2003, up from \$0.5 million in 2000. Ukraine also receives HIV/AIDS assistance under a USAID regional program to build the capacity of nongovernmental organizations and governments to implement, supervise, monitor, and evaluate peer HIV/AIDS education programs.

The new USAID HIV/AIDS strategy, covering the period 2003–2008, is designed to foster a coordinated, strategic, public-private effort to create a critical mass of high-quality HIV/AIDS services in up to eight oblasts with the highest HIV prevalence (Cherkasy, Crimea, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Kherson, Kyiv, Mykolayiv, and Odesa). The strategy concentrates on reduction of HIV transmission by focusing on meeting the needs of concentrated populations at greatest risk; giving particular attention to prevention interventions, with some attention to care and support; giving priority to local-level programs; and promoting involvement of both the public and the private sector. The specific sites receiving USAID support were determined by a number of criteria, including whether a concentrated program would be likely to reach a critical number of high-risk persons, whether there would be potential for additional funding sources, and whether local-level entities (nongovernmental organizations, government bodies, and civil society) were prepared to collaborate in the effort.

Previous USAID support focused on building capacity among nongovernmental organizations to conduct HIV prevention activities. Along with the European Union, USAID provided support to the Ukraine program of the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, which has become a leader in the country in information dissemination, analysis, coordination, and promotion of policy dialogue. Alliance/Ukraine provided technical and other support to 25 Ukrainian nongovernmental organizations working in 20 oblasts; its clearinghouse disseminated best practice and other information through its

was established in 1992 but was dissolved in 1998 because of budget disputes. In 1999, the government created the National AIDS Control Coordinating Council under the Cabinet and mandated that all regions establish HIV prevention programs. In 2001, a national plan for combating HIV/AIDS was approved; its goals included preventing the further spread of HIV, developing capacity to treat infected individuals, and providing social support and counseling for those living with HIV/AIDS.

Although the HIV/AIDS law is one of the most progressive in the region, the government still treats HIV/AIDS primarily as a medical issue. Prevention activities have been largely

website, newsletters, directories, and policy briefings. Currently, the Alliance is also serving as the principal recipient of Ukraine's grant from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. USAID has also provided support to a small grants program (implemented by the Counterpart Alliance for Partnership) to strengthen the capacity of selected nongovernmental organizations that work with injecting drug users and sex workers, a project to strengthen the advocacy skills of nongovernmental organizations working to defend and promote the rights of persons living with HIV/AIDS, and a demonstration project in Odessa on prevention of mother-to-child transmission.

In addition, USAID and other government agencies continue to be actively engaged in policy dialogue, technical assistance, and donor coordination to help ensure that donor funds—particularly the significant funds provided by the Global Fund—are well employed in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Ukraine.

IMPORTANT LINKS AND CONTACTS

USAID HIV/AIDS website, Ukraine

http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_health/aids/Countries/eande/ukraine.html

USAID/Ukraine, 19 Nizhniy Val, 04071 Kyiv, Ukraine

Tel: 380-44-537-4600, 380-44-492-7100

Fax: 380-44-537-4684

Ukraine website <http://www.usaid.kiev.ua>

Prepared for USAID by Social & Scientific Systems, Inc., under The Synergy Project

For more information, see http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_health/aids